

**Mr. Foradori** (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International development of France, His Excellency Mr. Jean-Marc Ayrault, for having convened this high-level open debate on an issue to which Argentina attaches a great deal of importance in its capacity as a country contributing troops and police to peacekeeping operations, which we have done for almost 60 years now.

We have also been a consistent promoter of full respect for human rights and for international humanitarian law.

Likewise, we welcome the statements delivered by his Excellency the President of the Central African Republic, the Secretary-General and the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The protection-related tasks of the United Nations have a central role to play in the context of the new emphasis placed by the Organization on conflict prevention and the achievement of sustainable peace and development, on the basis of the three reviews that took place focusing on peacekeeping operations, peacebuilding and the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. There can be no doubt that such protection tasks, particularly those carried out by peacekeeping operations of the United Nations, are vital when it comes to sustaining peace before, during and after conflict.

In this task, for which host States themselves have the primary responsibility, it is crucial that we have the participation of all relevant national actors, in particular civil society, bearing in mind the key role of women and youth in conflict prevention and in the maintenance and building of peace.

The protection of civilians in peacekeeping operations has a different focus than does the protection of civilians in the framework of international humanitarian law. This has become a hot topic of discussion over the past few years, particularly given its link to the use of armed force.

Against that backdrop and in line with the recommendation contained in the report (S/2015/446) of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, which is also acknowledged in this latest report, it is clear that the protection of civilians in peacekeeping operations constitutes an integrated effort on the part of a mission as a whole, requiring primarily close cooperation between the military, police and civilian components, in coordination with Governments, local communities and the humanitarian organizations on the ground.

My country therefore understands that this issue cannot be considered from a purely military perspective but has to be understood from a broader and more integrated political

and humanitarian perspective that is focused on the fostering of a more secure environment for protection. In such an environment, the use of force, which is sometimes necessary in order to avert tragedies such as those in Srebrenica and in Rwanda, where peacekeeping operations failed the people they were supposed to defend, constitutes a measure of last resort when other, non-military alternatives fail.

Also on the basis of other recommendations contained in the Panel's report, we underscore the importance of non-armed strategies for the protection of civilians in order to move peace processes forward, as well as the creation of the aforementioned climate of protection.

We believe that there can be an improvement in many aspects of the implementation of protection-of-civilians mandates in peacekeeping operations, among which we would underscore the specific training of troop and police contingents. We acknowledge the efforts of the Secretariat in devising guidelines and doctrinal frameworks for such training. We reiterate the need for broad-based consultations thereon with Member States, particularly police- and troop-contributing countries, because they will have to use them.

The effective protection of civilians in peacekeeping operations also requires unwavering political will, effective cooperation at the regional level, the better equipping of contingents, more specific and central planning tailored to the challenges on the ground, and the use of new technologies, in keeping with the principles of the Charter and of peacekeeping. All of this is of course closely linked to the adequate financing of such missions.

What happens regarding the protection of civilians anywhere in the world is not a matter of indifference for the Argentine delegation, because it affects all of us directly. That is why Argentina supports, in this area and in others, the principle of non-indifference among States. We cannot continue to lead from behind; we must roll out a solid, collective policy that ensures accurate diagnoses in order to promote specific therapeutic actions.

When civilians in desperate situations approach Blue Helmets, the basic minimum they expect from them is protection. Our responsibility as Member States is to create effective tools so that peacekeeping operations do not fail to live up to that expectation and serve to create a sustainable protection environment. We must be equal to the circumstances and know how to respond to those who require the protection of the United Nations. We in the United Nations must be smart enough to prevent, strong enough to implement and secure enough to lead. This is our collective obligation.